The Rose and The Nightingale.

The Rose's heart is heavy with desire,
And all her little leaves are tipped with flame;
But she is shy and full of tender shame,
And red with blushes for the rapturous fire
Her fond dreams of the Nightingale inspire;
For all the garden knows her secret aim,
By the perfume in which she breathes his name
And the bride-beauty of her soft attire.

Oh, when you find her, Nightingale, I know,
Some time between the twilight and the morn,
Your joy will make the listening lilies glow;
And you who in the dusk were so forlorn,
In ecstasy of love will tremble so
You will fall fainting on the cruel thorn.

—Elsa Barker in Harper's Magazine.

The Rag-Time Girl.

BY F. H. LANCASTER.

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That was what he had called her—a ragtime girl. And everybody agreed. No sustained theme or lofty symphony here—only taking bits of brightness. Much merry laughter and gay chatter, sweet sunshine in the shadow, sweeter song in the silence, but of no practical use. Quite ignorant of the ethics of money making or soul saving; in short, posted upon precious little save the science of being gladhearted—and of making others so.

Occasionally God sends such a sunbeam to dwell among us—and he had called her a ragtime girl. Lifting his lip a little, not in contempt, for he was a gentleman, but with a sensation of superiority that sat smiling to his egotism.

His ideal woman was strong, serene, soulful and many other of those big S's that are so apt to spell sulks. "Quite saturated with a purpose in life, and bending all her energies to its accomplishing." Which, being interpreted, means selfish. But the man had not gotten as far as the interpretation yet. He thought it all very grand and fine. Which, perhaps, it was in a way, though the way was more likely to lead to a blind alley than to a sunny upland.

Her office was just across from his and he watched her working away, day in and out. It never occurred to him that she was only earning her bread and salt in a roundabout way, instead of taking a short cut to competence by doing something she knew how to do. He thought her high-minded, devoted, plucky. Hence his lip lifted when he spoke of the girl.

And the ragtime girl? Knowing little, she yet knew that the man's upper lip was short and tender. A piece of knowledge unluckily acquired. Better for her had she continued to hold him stern-browed and horrid. When a girl begins to watch for a certain expression on a man's face, she is in a bad way—or at least her peace of mind is. Any one but a heedless, merry mortal would have realized that a month ago.

Meantime the man's acquaintance with the woman began to be punctuated with handshakes and snatches of conversation. "Transit treats," he called them, because taken in the elevator.

The woman was as clear-headed as he had imagined her to be. She listened well. He found out where she lunched and accommodated his hours to hers, sat opposite her at table and felt that he was living the life.

Then the rift came in his sky of blue. The woman began to talk—how things should be. Now, although a thousand years have lived and died since Jemshid admonished his ambitious sweetheart:

"Give me the bow and mark my skill."

Neither his words nor their sentiment have passed away. First and last comes man's cry to woman: "Watch me shoot"! Really, that is what she is here for.

The man said nothing of this kind to the woman as they stood together

That was what he called her—"a ragtime girl."

at the elevator. He only noted that her eyes were cold and her lips unlined by smiling.

"Do you ever laugh?" he asked her abruptly.

"Oh, yes; I suppose so—when I happen to think about it."

"Happen to think about it!" As an echo there rang in his mind's ear a ripple of laughter at which one must needs smile in involuntary sympathy. The man frowned, partly at the echo, partly at her reply.

"Rather a mechanical operation, he commented.

"What—laughter? Yes. But there generally seems to be a hitch in the machinery. Expresses anything on earth rather than merriment. Ghastly travesty on mirth."

"Scorn, derision, defiance," he began, feeling suddenly that it was in him to make a brilliant psychic reflection. But the woman lost it all to the world by nodding absently and plunging into her office.

The man slammed his door and flung his hat on the table.

"Plague take it!" Here he was

He wanted to hear her laugh.

ready to shoot and nobody to watch him!

Not that he voiced any such reproach on Providence. Not in the least given to doing or saying silly things, it never occurred to him, or to any one else, that he could be swayed by so slight an annoyance. His pen plodded on patiently, and document after document took shape with all the precision required by law; yet one thought lurked among the grey cells of the man's brain, and at last won its way into muttered speech.

"Good Lord! The idea of living day in and out with a woman who only smiled when she happened to think about it!"

It was an hour before dinner, but the man got up and went out with the brisk step of one going to keep an appointment. Before he opened the street door his ears were straining for a certain sound—a sound as of silver bells and pure thoughts sweetly rung in tune. His ears strained in vain. Silence brooded over his home. Still with the brisk movements of a man on business bent, he glanced into the parlors, down the hall and up the stairs.

"Surely she was to have been with them for a month."

Eluding the direct tendency of his thoughts, he turned into the library and a glow of content warmed him as he beheld the ragtime girl before the fire. Heaven knows why he should have expected her to laugh then. There was nothing laughable in the situation for the girl—cornered by this grave-eyed mortal, who always seemed to be seeing something beyond her. But his ears were straining for the sound of her laughter. Ergo, she should laugh. Instead, she made a motion to rise."

"Don't go," he commanded, and by way of explanation. "It is a raw afternoon."

"Miriam had an appointment with the dressmaker. She told me to tell you in case——"

The man nodded. He was beginning to feel as he used to when he was a boy and waiting for the dinner bell to ring—that if he had to wait much longer he would seize upon the thing and ring it himself. Yet, one cannot ring laughter even from a ragtime girl.

He leaned sideways against the mantle and stared at the fire. Conscious only that she was getting deeper and deeper into gravity. And he wanted to hear her laugh. His heart had joined its longing to the longing of his ears. Probably it was partly his nerves. Most overdriven men have bad nerves—only it take the form of swearing, instead of hysteria, so nobody notices it. Whatever the reason, in all his life of eager aims, the man had never wanted anything so badly as he now wanted this peal of provokingly withheld laughter.

Now, it was a habit with this man when he wanted anything to work for it until he got it. He had never learned to wait, or to give up. Within three minutes impatience rose in a rush from his heart to his lips. He swung around and stood over the girl.

"Have you set up a rivalry with that sad-faced king who never smiled again? What are you so grave about, little owl?"

In her surprise and confusion, what could the ragtime girl do but blush? Be it said to her credit that she did that thoroughly, blindly. And all men know that there is nothing under heaven so disastrous to mental poise as a woman's blush, especially when—

Facts came to the man like revelations, and he passed them on to the girl through a medium of incoherent speech and coherent pauses.

And the ragtime girl, knowing nothing of subtle analysis of sensation, the origin of emotion or the mysteries of magnetism; only that his lips were tender and that she loved him, let him tangle his coat buttons in her hair and accepted the facts at their full face value.

TALE OF TWO DOGS.

How Newcomer Taught Old Fellow Becoming Modesty.

Bill Dorgan used to own a pup, in which all breeds were well mixed up; a hump-eyed, yellow sort of cur, with fleas and sandburs in its fur. It was a scrapper in its way and licked some dogs most every day; and it, in course of time, did reach the verdict that it was a peach.

It used to loaf around the town, and show its teeth and wear a frown, and every now and then 'twould wail: "Why won't some dog step on my tail, or bite my ear, or bark or growl, or look me in the face and howl? Are all the dogs devoid of snap? I'm simply spoiling for a scrap."

One day a bulldog came to town; it was a sort of brindle brown, with bandy legs and sawed-off tail, and teeth that would eat through a nail. Its face was scratched, its eyes were sore, its tongue was like a cellar door. It paddled up the village street as though in search of stuff to eat, and when the mongrel saw it come, the latter cried: "A scrap, by gum! Now, doggies, see me go and muss the stuffing out of yonder cuss; I'll teach the ugly, lop-eared clown to push himself into this town."

The mongrel, with upstanding wool, jumped then upon the vagrant bull; and then there came a cloud of dust, a crack as though some bone had bust, a shriek, a moan, a sickening thud, a gentle rain of fur and blood; and then the bulldog took his way, and nodded to the dogs, "Good day." The mongrel had been scattered round so all the chunks were never found; Bill Dorgan scraped up what he could, and planted them out in the wood.

MORAL:

The fighting man may yawp and brag;
But soon he'll run against a snag.

—Walt Mason in Nebraska State Journal.

IN A COMEDY JAIL.

Prisoners Rarely Attempt to Secure Their Liberty.

Elizabethtown, the county seat of Essex, in the Adirondacks, possesses a comedy jail. It is small, having windows secured by wooden bars, and a jail yard inclosed by a solid fence of three-quarter inch boards which a healthy male could push over with his shoulder. But the prisoners rarely, if ever, attempt to escape.

Some good stories are told by residents. It is a custom to allow the prisoners out on parole, so that they may cut the grass on neighboring lawns, do garden work, or repair roads for the village or county. Recently one prisoner who should have returned at 6 o'clock did not apply for admission until nearly an hour later. The warden angrily demanded to know the reason, and added:

"Don't let this occur again or I will not allow you to come in. I lock the door at 6 o clock and won't open it in the future for you."

Another, accused of and awaiting trial for manslaughter, overstaid his parole and pleaded as an excuse that as it was Saturday he thought he would go and spend Sunday with his wife, returning to the jail on Monday morning.

Uncle Sidney's Views.

I hold that the true age of wisdom is when
We are boys and girls, and not women and men—
When, as credulous children, we know things because
We believe them—however averse to the laws.
It is faith, then, not science and reason, I say,
That is genuine wisdom—and would that to-day
We, as then, were as wise and ineffably blest
As to live, love and die, and trust God for the rest!
So I simply deny the old notion, you know,
That the wiser we get the older we grow;
For in youth all we know we are certain of. Now
The greater our knowledge the more we allow
For skeptical margin; and hence I regret
That the world isn't flat and the sun doesn't set,
And we may not go creeping up home when we die
Through the moon, like a round, yellow hole in the sky.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

History Rewritten.

Columbus was recounting the perils through which he had passed.

"Hurricane!" he cried. "I never saw anything like it. Why, when I was passing around the horn the wind blew my name in the bottle!"

At this his friends, remembering that the great man had come home in the steerage, dealt kindly with him.

The millennium, like most good things, isn't in any hurry about arriving.

Maubikeck, the Lion-Tamer.

By SEWARD W. HOPKINS,

Author of "Jack Robbins of America," "In the China Sea," "Two Gentlemen of Hawaii," "On a False Charge," Etc.

CHAPTER IX.

"Number 101!"

"What is it?"

"You are to be put into a road gang this morning, and go out to work on the public boulevard."

I was known as Number 101. My keeper imparted the above delightful information to me on the ninth day of my imprisonment.

I say delightful because I mean it, and do not use the word in an ironical sense. The news was indeed delightful and gratifying. It was what I had waited for. It was the beginning of my labor for the state, and my hopes rose, for now, surely, I would find an opportunity to strike for my liberty.

The officer in command lost no time, but put us at once to work. Most of the prisoners had evidently been there before, for they seemed to know just what to do, as if they were resuming work that had but recently been laid down.

After dinner, I, in company with the same ill-smelling ruffian who was my marching partner, was sent some distance away to bring back a supply of cement in a wagon drawn by a small horse, a rugged, stout little animal, that did not seem to feel fatigue.

As we left the main force behind, my heart began to beat violently and my brain to work quickly, for now, I thought, the only opportunity I would get had come.

We traveled perhaps three miles. Then we came to a sort of storehouse or shed, where we stoped. The guard had the key to the shed, and, handing it to me, he ordered me to open the door.

I did as I was told. Nothing could exceed my humility and meekness at that moment.

The stuff used for these roads proved to be a kind of asphalt brought from the coast farther north, and stored in the shed until needed. It was now dry, and lay in piles of broken lumps and blocks.

The guard stood looking on while my companion and I proceeded to carry the stuff to the wagon and load up for our return trip. I had resolved that this return trip would never be made—at least by me.

Suddenly an overwhelming influence seized me, and I struck the blow that I had been dreaming of ever since my incarceration.

I had not the least cause to feel murderously inclined toward the guard, but it was my liberty against his life, and the balance fell my way. I had reached his side with a heavy piece of the asphalt in my hands. Without giving him time to raise his rifle, I lifted the lump and sent it crashing against his skull.

With a groan he fell into a heap on the floor.

I sprang to the horse and began rapidly to loosen him from the wagon. But now an enemy arose upon whom I had not counted. My fellow prisoner, either from a mistaken sense of duty or from a desire to win favor and perhaps pardon for himself, sought to prevent my departure. He sprang upon me, and we had a hand-to-hand tussle, in which it seemed at times as if I was going to get the worst of it. Backward and forward we swayed, now with his hand at my throat, now with my fist thrust square against his jaw, writhing, twisting, biting and kicking, until I finally got a good grip on his throat and nearly strangled him.

Seizing him with a mighty effort, I hurled him against the body of the guard, and with a last pull at the straps, freed the horse from his encumbrance.

Leaping upon his back, I banged his sides with my heels, and away he went to the northward, carrying me toward freedom.

But the Sardinian prisoner was not yet beaten. I heard the crack of the guard's rifle behind me, and felt a stinging sensation in the back. I was shot.

I felt the warm blood oozing down my back, and began to feel weak and dizzy. Even though I had not been hit in a vital spot, I knew that the loss of blood would finish me unless I was able soon to stay it. But to halt now would be death anyhow, and I kept on. The rifle was fired again, but this time the distance was too great for the Sardinian's aim, and I was not touched.

On, on we went, my little horse and I, past woods and past farms, until I saw the road across the valley, which I had seen from my prison window, and which had seemed to lead to places of refuge in the mountains.

Suddenly my horse stumbled and fell. My weakness was now so great that my hands refused to cling; my legs were as those of a man paralyzed. I rolled from the animal's back and fell with a thud by the wayside. Relieved of his burden, the horse recovered his footing and plunged forward out of sight.

I was stunned by the fall. I became conscious of a burning sensation in my throat, then an excruciating pain in my head, then another in my back; my arms and legs tingled as if filled with needles. I felt something pressed to my lips, and again the burning in my throat. My mind grew calmer. I opened my eyes. Vision had returned to me.

Bending over me was a monk. "You are wounded, son," he said, in a voice that was soft and almost womanly.

"Yes, father," I replied, my own voice coming only in a whisper. "I have been shot."

The monk's face was very pale—unnaturally white, I thought. He looked at me through his goggles a moment before answering.

"You are wounded in the back, son," he said. "Is it the work of an assassin?"

"I will tell you the truth, father," I said, weakly. "I am a prisoner of the state. The brother of the prefetto was murdered. I was accused of the murder, and though I knew nothing about it, I was convicted. I was at work on the public road to-day and escaped. A fellow prisoner fired at me with the guard's rifle and wounded me. They will be after me soon."

"Alas, son! This is a bad business."

The monk, as he said this, glanced nervously around, as if apprehensive of detection in thus succoring a prisoner of state who had escaped.

He put his hands under me and lifted me gently from the ground. I seemed to be but a child in his arms. Holding me across the back of his mule, he easily mounted, and, speaking to the animal, we were soon moving up the mountain side.

We did not travel far in this way—perhaps a quarter of a mile. Then we had come to a thick portion of the forest, and we were in a rugged mountain region. The monk had been peering from side to side, as if in search of something, and suddenly halted his mule before a tall, white-barked tree that stood near the edge of the road.

"I thought I knew the place," he murmured to himself. "That is certainly the tree."

Sliding from the saddle to the ground, the monk took me in his arms and carried me into the forest. He spoke to his mule and the animal followed him.

He carried me carefully over rocks and fallen trees and through seemingly impassable places. He seemed to know fully every foot of the uneven ground, and to be looking for some particular spot.

"Ah!" he exclaimed at last. "It is here. The soldiers of the prefetto will have to work to find you here."

"And you will not betray me, father?" I asked.

"Nay, I know full well the ease with which the prefetto imprisons falsely. You are safe here. And you will be fed."

"I thank you, father," I said, in gratitude.

We had entered a grotto. The air inside was cool and sweet. I could hear the murmur and ripple of a spring and mountain stream near by. I felt a sense of rest and security, and my trust in the monk was firm.

Soon delicium set in.

I was now at the circus and gazing with wonder and admiration at Nita Barlotti, the trapeze queen, and at Maubikeck, the lion tamer, in their respective acts.

Then the visit to Ralph Graviscourt's rooms and the discovery of the photograph was as vivid in my mind as on the day it actually occurred. And so on, I lived over and over again the stirring scenes of my last days in New York, and the departure of Maubikeck and myself on the steamer.

And then the accident; Maubikeck rushing into my room and carrying me on deck; and there standing on top of a wave, still in the glare of the light from heaven, stood Maubikeck, and above him, in red letters, seemingly of fire floating in the air, I saw the words, "If you are saved and I am not, save Nita from Maligni!"

I was vaguely conscious of a lapse of time as I lived over these scenes. I seemed to feel that some one was near me. But I knew nothing real. There was nothing of actual life about me.

Again I fancied I heard the rippling of a stream.

Again I thought that marble walls surrounded me. At first it seemed that I was in a tomb, but gradually consciousness came to me and I awoke. The bed of furs was my couch; the grotto walls were above me. An odor of something came to my nostrils faintly. I turned my head.

A fire was burning in the little stove. By it, a cigarette in his mouth, holding something over the coals, sat Mutterelli. He rose and looked at me.

"All right, signor," he said, in the calm voice of a man who knew what he was doing and had been doing it a long time. "It will be ready in a minute. A bit of toast and a sip of wine will do you good. Keep still. You are all right, signor."

"Mutterelli!" I whispered.

"Signor! You know me!" he cried. "Jesus be praised! You have long been near death, but now you will be restored to life. Ah, signor! How's that?"

As he said this he put a wooden board before me, upon which was a glass of wine and a bit of white breast of chicken and a slice of toast. Nothing that I had ever eaten in Delmonico's tasted half so good as that dainty morsel in that hour of my return to earth.

Then I closed my eyes and a delicious sense of rest stole over me, and I fell asleep.

I slept long and sweetly, and awoke much refreshed. Feeling strong, I raised myself on my elbow and looked about. Squatting on a low stool near the opening of the grotto was Mutterelli, smoking the inevitable cigarette, calmly paring some potatoes, the expression on his face being one of utter content and placid happiness.

"Mutterelli!" I said in a whisper, which was all the voice I could raise.

Mutterelli laid down his knife and came toward me.

"You called, signor," he said.

"Where is the monk?" I asked.

Mutterelli put his finger to his lips.

"You are not to talk, signor," he said. "Be patient, and when you are stronger we will speak of it. You have been very ill, signor."

"How long have I been in the grotto, Mutterelli?" I asked.

"Sixteen days, signor."

I sank back on my fur couch, overcome by a sense of weakness and utter helplessness. Sixteen days! And it seemed as though it was but an hour since the monk had carried me into the grotto, and had set about dressing my wound. And the change from the monk to Mutterelli was so strange, so unexpected. Yet Mutterelli was calm, and seemed perfectly at home in this strange place.

When he had replied to my last question he offered me a glass of wine, which I drank. Then he turned and walked out of the grotto. I remembered that he had done this when I first saw and recognized him, and realized that this was his method of enforcing silence. So alone I lay, and in my weakness wondered what chain of circumstances had led Mutterelli to the grotto.

In about an hour Mutterelli returned.

He slowly rolled a cigarette in his fingers and lighted it, drew a stool near my bed and sat down.

"How do you feel, signor?" he asked.

"I feel much better," I replied.

Mutterelli was evidently going to talk, so I waited patiently for him to begin.

"You have been very sick, signor," he said finally. "It is now sixteen days since you came here."

"Yes," I replied; "so you told me before. But how many days is it since you came here?"

"Sixteen, signor," he replied calmly.

"You followed me?"

"Yes, signor. I was told where to find you."

"Then my hiding place is known!" I said.

"Yes, signor. Your hiding place is known to me and to the monk who brought you here. That is all."

"And you saw the monk? You must have seen him, for he only could tell you where to find me."

"Yes, signor, I saw the monk. He is a good monk, signor. I alone in Sardinia have his confidence. The monk and I belong to the same secret society, signor, though I am but a poor member. See, signor?"

"What is his name, Mutterelli?"

"He is Brother Michael, signor, of the Order of Jesuits. He is high in favor with the general of the order, signor, and travels much, doing missionary work."

The exertion of talking had been severe and I felt that I must stop.

"You are weary, signor," said Mutterelli. "You have talked too much. You must rest. I will leave you."

He sauntered toward the entrance to the grotto, and I saw him pause long enough to twist the end of another cigarette and light it. Then he disappeared through the marble arch.

I lay back on my furs, wondering. There was, in my mind, a vague yet rapidly growing conviction that Mutterelli and the monk were one and the same. The timely meeting between the monk and Mutterelli; the implicit confidence which the monk reposed in Mutterelli, who, I knew, had a price—all these things, as I thought them over, convinced me that Mutterelli was Brother Michael and Brother Michael was Mutterelli. So far he had done well. But how was I ever to get away from Sardinia, and how was I going to continue my efforts to restore Nita Barlotti to the sphere in life to which I knew she belonged?

(To be continued.)

Parisian Trees.

Paris is said to lead the world in the culture of city trees. The success of the French capital is due not so much to an admirable soil climate as to a well-organized system of caring for the trees.

In large nurseries young trees are grown and prepared for the Parisian streets. The culture of the soil is elaborate. From the very beginning the trees are pruned and staked to compel a straight growth. By frequent transplanting the roots become so hardened that they are enabled to withstand injury due to transportation. When a tree is sufficiently large, it is set out in the streets with the same care that was lavished upon it in the nursery. Often the cost of planting a single tree is $50. Whenever a storm destroys the city trees the nursery can be immediately drawn upon for another supply.

Thoughtful.

Young Wife—"There is a gentleman in the library, dear, who wants to see you."

Young Husband—"Do you know who it is?"

Young Wife—"You must forgive me, dear, but that cough of yours has worried me so of late, and you take such poor care of your health, and—and, oh, if I were to lose you, my darling!"

Bursts into tears.

Young Husband—"There, there, dear! Your fondness for me has inspired foolish and unnecessary fears. I'm all right; you mustn't be alarmed. But I'll see the physician, of course, just to satisfy you. Is it Dr. Pellet?"

Young Wife—"N-o, it is not a doctor; it's a—a life insurance agent."